

The Polynesian.

Vol. XIV.

HONOLULU, MAY 23, 1857.

No. 3.

The Polynesian;

Published weekly at Honolulu, Oahu, H. I.

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[From the Boston Traveller.]

Raising of the Russian War Vessels at Sebastopol.

A few years since the combined nations of England and France dispatched to the shores of the Crimea a powerful and warlike expedition to exterminate and destroy. In a month or two an expedition will sail from the shores of this country for the same destination, but unlike the expedition first named, its purpose is to rescue and preserve.

It has been before briefly stated, that Mr. John P. Gowen, of Boston, had obtained from the Russian government the contract to raise from the waters of the harbor of Sebastopol the numerous vessels of war which were sunk there when the allied armies were besieging that spot long famous in the history of the world. The magnitude of this contract has not been fully understood in this country. Mr. Gowen has heretofore been favorably known to the world by his success in raising the United States steamship *Missouri* from the waters of the bay of Gibraltar, a performance which engineers from England and other countries had attempted in vain. It happened that while at Gibraltar, a Russian vessel came into the harbor in a damaged condition. To the relief of this vessel Mr. Gowen sent a number of his men, refusing any compensation, and it is probable that this act of courtesy, with the fame obtained by Mr. Gowen in the bringing up of the *Missouri*, induced the Russian government, at the time they contemplated raising their fleet, to send for him, which was done through the Russian Minister in this country.

Mr. Gowen accordingly went to St. Petersburg, and had a number of interviews with the Grand Duke Constantine, and then proceeded across the country to Sebastopol, for the purpose of making a personal investigation of the condition of the ships. He was engaged in this business for several months, having a Russian steamer at his disposal. Here he descended with his submarine armor to the bottom of the harbor and examined the sunken vessels. He found that the channel of the harbor was in the middle, with banks upon both sides, that of the north being of sand, and that upon the south mud. In the sand there were no worms, in the mud they were quite plentiful. Of course the vessels exposed to the attacks of the worms are now of little value; but it fortunately happens that a small portion, comparatively, were sunk where they would suffer from the attacks of these worms.

When the English and French approached Sebastopol, the Russians, to protect their harbor, sank at the entrance, between forts Alexander and Constantine, two of the 120 gun ships, two of the 80 gun frigates and two corvettes. The line composed by these sunken vessels was about three-quarters of a mile long, the water being sixty feet deep. The vessels sunk here were amongst the finest in the fleet. In the great gale which was fatal to the English and French vessels in the Black Sea, this line was so much disturbed that the allies, if they had known it, could easily have gained an entrance into the harbor. This caused the Russians to sink a second line between Fort Michael and Fort Nicholas, about a mile inward. When the Redan was captured by the allies, all the balance of the fleet was sunk, preparatory to abandoning the place. The following is a list of the vessels sunk: 15 line-of-battle-ships, 7 frigates, 10 brigs of war, 5 schooners of war, 5 cutters, 1 boom ship, 1 ten gun yacht, 23 transports, 15 steamers of war, 19 merchant ships. In all 106 vessels.

The machinery of the steamers of war, before being sunk, was carefully covered with a preparation of tallow to prevent injury from the water. They were scuttled by boring three inch augurs near the water line, and all this was done before the English and French appeared before the place, for the Russians did not entertain the idea of defending it, and one division of the army had advanced nine miles on the Perekop road, when word was brought that the English and French, instead of entering the city had halted outside, and were fortifying their position. It was then that the Russian army returned, built the earth redoubts, and made that long and stubborn defence which has rendered the name of Sebastopol so famous. Thus the Russian officials at Sebastopol tell the story. Mr. Gowen examined thirty plans, made a plan of the harbor and adjacent country, and returned to St. Petersburg. He found that there were no less than thirteen competitors

for the contract from France and England, among the former being the company known as the Credit Mobilier. The government finally concluded to make the contract with Mr. Gowen on the most liberal terms, which cannot fail, we think, to be amply remunerative. The value of the ships sunk is said to be sixty-five million dollars, and he has a certain portion of the value of each ship raised at the moment it is placed in the hands of the Russian government.

The expedition which sails from this country will consist of two vessels, one of which leaves Philadelphia on or about the 1st of April, and the second soon after. The number of persons engaged to accompany it from this country is about one hundred and fifty, the well-known ship-builder of this city, S. F. Holbrook, Esq., being one of the superintendents. There will be, also, shipbuilders, caulkers, machinists, engineers, &c. Some of the hydraulic machinery for raising the vessels is of the most colossal description, one cylinder alone weighing 54,000 lbs.; indeed it must be so, for some of the vessels raised are of 5,000 tons burthen. The value of the material to be furnished by the Russian government to be used in the raising of this fleet, will be about a million and a half of dollars, and the time occupied in performing the contract will, it is thought, be about eighteen months or two years.

At Kertch there are also some five or six Russian vessels sunk, which are included in the contract, and in the harbor of Sebastopol there are some \$800,000 worth of chains and anchors, which the French and English threw overboard from their inability to carry them off. In addition to the expedition from this country, the Russian government bind themselves to furnish them three thousand to five thousand men, whose pay from Mr. Gowen, as usual in that country, will not be more than twenty-five cents per day, they "finding" themselves. Take it altogether, it is the greatest contract—submarine or otherwise—ever entered into, and it will be with pride and pleasure that the countrymen of Mr. Gowen and his associates will hear of their entire success in the undertaking. Mr. G., as is well known, is a self-made, enterprising Yankee, who, though comparatively a young man, has travelled in nearly every country upon the globe.

Mr. Gowen, who was at Sebastopol in November last, gives us some interesting particulars from that now famous city. The Russian government is engaged in rebuilding it. Before the siege it was quite a populous place, containing, it is supposed, about sixty thousand persons. When Mr. Gowen was there there were about six thousand people in the place. Several thousand laborers were then engaged upon the works, and the number was to be largely increased. The old city was famous for its narrow streets, like Boston; the new city will be built in squares, like Philadelphia. It is also said that there are restrictions against the erection of wooden buildings. The forts about the city, according to the examinations of Mr. Gowen, are only about half destroyed. Of the immensity of the warlike material scattered with so much profusion about this celebrated spot, some idea may be formed from the fact that the Russians have already gathered over sixteen thousand tons of shot and shell, and yet they are so thickly scattered around that it is impossible to tread without touching them. There are, however, no dead bodies to be seen, they having been all carefully buried.

There was one spot visited by Mr. G. of melancholy interest. It was a deep ravine, formerly crossed by a bridge. Into this ravine, the bodies of two thousand Russians, French and English, killed in one of the more fatal battles, had been placed, and covered with earth. A wooden cross above has a brief inscription, telling of the slaughtered thousands thus rudely entombed beneath.

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Ships supplied with Refreshments, Provisions, &c., at the shortest notice, on reasonable terms. Whalers' Bills wanted. 43-tf

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Von HOLT & HEUCK,
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Fort Street, Honolulu. 44-tf

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Ships supplied with Recruits at the shortest notice, on reasonable terms. Bills of Exchange wanted. 35-tf

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